

vote for the list, and then the number of people that are elected will receive—will be included in the government that is being elected and will have the opportunity to write the Constitution. But it was decided by the transitional government that women would be included, and that 25 percent of those who are elected will be women. And the way that that was done is that every third name on the list is a woman.

So we had the opportunity to meet for several days with these women, and the longer we met, the more engaged everybody became. You could have really very frank discussions. So many times when we go over there, it is just for a meeting of very short time. You never really got to know the women.

There have also been women that have come over here to work with us. But despite the differences in the women, they were Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, independents and Christians, that they had not really discussed political issues with each other, and what we were able to do was to be able to facilitate and help them develop the tools and the skills to be able to work together and realize that politics really is the art of compromise. Some of them were very rigid in what they believe should be done, but they were able to see that you need to discuss, and it is very important to have a majority party, but also to have a minority party.

□ 1330

Even the Sunni women that were there, who came in wanting to postpone the elections because their areas are obviously unsafe, they still want to participate. What all of the women told us was that they need to have everyone participate, all the different groups. Many of them, even within the different groups, are divided into other groups.

But we were really able to discuss this with them, and I think they went away with a positive reinforcement of how to deal with that. What we came away with was such a feeling of how important it is, how they view the democracy that we have and the freedoms that we have and how they really want to have the same type of thing.

Now, these elections are really only the first step in them reaching democracy, and they will be able to write their constitution and form an interim government. The constitution will have to be written by August 15, which is a very short time. The interim government will take effect, and then they will have a slate for eventual election of the permanent officers who will govern in December of 2005. But they are on their way.

One thing that they said to us is, The U.S., we think of them as occupiers, but please do not leave us until the job is done. We need you there. We really need to have a democracy. And they are willing to give their life for it.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate them and wish them well on their election.

SMART SECURITY AND THE CASE FOR LEAVING IRAQ, PART 2

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the United States invasion and occupation of Iraq violate America's core values of honesty, responsibility, security, justice and freedom. This has been a dishonest war from the word go. The President said he had hard evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It turns out he did not. To date, no weapons of mass destruction have been found. The President himself has officially called off the hunt.

Irresponsible behavior has been a guiding principle of the administration's behavior in leading the Nation to war in Iraq. Specifically, what has been the response of our leaders when they have been exposed for misleading the country, or for sending American men and women to their deaths without imminent threat to American security, or what has been the response for keeping our National Guard troops in Iraq for many months longer than they had agreed, or for signing off on orders that led to torture in American prisons?

Our leaders do not take responsibility for their failures. Instead, they change the subject, make excuses, or worst of all, blame an underling. Not a single administration official has resigned as a result of the mistakes that led us into this misguided and dangerous war. George Tenet received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Alberto Gonzales and Condoleezza Rice are up for promotion, and Donald Rumsfeld is still the Secretary of Defense, although if he traveled to Germany, he could possibly be arrested as a war criminal.

The Iraq invasion has made the Middle East a more violent and unstable place, and it has made America less secure at home by creating a terrorist breeding ground in a country that was not a haven for Islamic fundamentalists before we invaded it. It seems too ironic to be true, but after our Nation was attacked on 9/11 by Islamic fundamentalists, the Bush administration's response was to bomb and kill civilians in one of the few countries in the Middle East that was actually inhospitable to Islamic fundamentalists.

Speaking of justice, there is no justice in an operation that has caused the deaths of over 1,400 Americans and untold thousands of Iraqis for the purely ideological reason that our leader did not like their leader. Nor do we serve the cause of freedom by killing innocent people in a country that did not ask for our help, by destroying a nation's roads, schools and hospitals; and in the process we have created a playground for Islamic fundamentalists.

Freedom is very important to Americans, and I believe that the President's recent inaugural address made a mock-

ery of the word "freedom." He should ask the people of Iraq, many of whom have suffered because they lost a loved one or had a friend maimed by foreign bullets, just how free do they feel today.

Some say that we have a responsibility to the people of Iraq to keep our troops there, that we not abandon them. This belief misses the point. Our very presence in Iraq is the cause of much of the violence.

We have a moral responsibility to leave in order to stem the violence. We owe this to the people of Iraq, who have been killed by the thousands and thousands. We owe it to our troops who are sitting ducks for terrorists. That is why later today I will introduce legislation calling for a withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq.

In the 108th Congress I also introduced a SMART Security Resolution For the 21st Century, which calls for a sensible, multilateral American response to terrorism. Adopting a smart approach to foreign policy will help us avoid the many mistakes that have characterized the war in Iraq.

By supporting my call to bring the troops home, we will send a message to the President, one, asking that he develop and implement a plan to begin the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq; two, develop and implement a plan for the reconstruction of Iraq's civil and economic infrastructure; three, convene an emergency meeting of Iraq's leadership, Iraq's neighbors, the United Nations, and the Arab League to create an international peacekeeping force in Iraq and to replace U.S. military forces with Iraqi police and national guard forces to ensure Iraq's security; and, finally, take all necessary steps to provide the Iraqi people the opportunity to completely control their own internal affairs.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we pursued a SMART security strategy for America, and we must do this by withdrawing our troops from Iraq. It is not too late to make the smart choice, the right choice, the choice to bring our troops home.

REPORT ON EVENTS IN SUDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, this month we witnessed the signing of the peace agreement in Nairobi, Kenya, between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The signing of this agreement has ended Africa's longest running war, a brutal civil war that spanned 21 years where 2 million people died. I congratulate the parties for reaching this agreement.

I also want to commend President Bush, Secretary of State Powell and his team, Ambassador Danforth and all the outside groups for their unrelenting efforts in the support of peace.

I also want to commend all the countries that played a critical role in the

peace, particularly Norway and Kenya. Now all parties have to live up to the agreement and begin the task of rebuilding the lives of millions of people.

This would be a good time for the administration to appoint a strong acting ambassador to immediately go to Khartoum to help implement the peace agreement. This would not be to reward Khartoum, but to keep pressure on all parties to make sure the agreement sticks and to speak out on the issue of Darfur. There is nothing like being on the scene every day, all day. So much has gone into getting this agreement. We must do everything to make sure that it lasts.

It is also important as we look forward that we do not forget the tragedy still unfolding in Sudan. As I speak, women continue to be raped, children die from hunger and disease, men continue to be murdered by the government-sponsored Janjaweed, and new attacks continue to be launched against defenseless villages.

Many of these people have been huddled in camps for over a year. Put yourself in their shoes for a minute. You are uprooted from your home. You live in a refugee camp where conditions are terrible. You do not know if your family members are dead or alive. You are sick, weak, watching people die all around you from hunger and disease. Now picture you have been there for over a year.

The tsunami in South Asia demonstrates how quickly and effectively the world can respond to such terrible disasters. Once again, we are reminded that the world has failed the people of Darfur. I commend the quick and generous response to the tsunami, but we must not only focus on disasters as they occur, but also to respond to disasters like in Darfur that have gone on for decades.

The peace agreement between the north and south opens new doors for a comprehensive peace throughout the country; and Dr. John Garang, who will now be vice president of Sudan, has an opportunity to play a positive role and should go to Darfur to help bring about peace.

I have strongly supported the United States commitment to the United Nations. Since I became chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations, all U.S. assessments to the U.N. have been paid in full. But over the past year, we have seen the United Nations fight an uphill battle on Darfur. Resolution after resolution has failed to have any impact. At least two Security Council members, China and Russia, have threatened to veto strong resolutions from being passed.

Secretary General Kofi Annan continues to report that the situation in Darfur continues to deteriorate and the Government of Sudan has violated the previous Security Council resolutions by failing to disarm and prosecute the Janjaweed.

NGOs are leaving the region. Secretary General Annan has sent a Commission on Inquiry to Darfur to investigate if genocide has occurred, and he has the report in his hands as I speak. Most people believe there is genocide. But whether or not they use that term, it still is horrible what is taking place. And no matter what you call it, the facts remain, innocent civilians are systematically being murdered, raped and displaced; and the world has failed to stop it.

It is time for the United Nations and the international community to respond in a meaningful way. I ask Secretary General Annan to go to Darfur to confirm with his own eyes that the situation has not improved. Then Secretary General Annan should make bold recommendations and call on the Security Council to immediately implement them, because a strong, meaningful resolution should be put forward and could make a difference.

It is now time for Secretary General Annan to use his strong moral leadership. He is a Nobel Peace Prize recipient and surely the Security Council would take his recommendations. He should use his power and prestige to plead for the people of Darfur. And if the Security Council fails to take meaningful action, Secretary General Annan should resign in protest.

I am not blaming Kofi Annan for Darfur. He does not control the Security Council. But I ask him to use his leadership to demand a new course of action from them. I believe these actions could turn the attention of the world back to what is taking place in Darfur.

Resigning under protest is an act of great moral leadership, and this world would respect his actions. Great men in history have given up their posts to force change. In 1973 at the height of the Watergate scandal, President Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliott Richardson to fire the special prosecutor. He refused and resigned in protest and later got the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

William Wilberforce, a member of the British Parliament, he could have been Prime Minister, but spoke out to abolish the slave trade, and gave up being Prime Minister of England. Anything Kofi Annan can do to get the world to focus on Darfur would be greatly admired.

Mr. Speaker, if in the year 2005 the Security Council cannot deal with genocide, the raping of women and the systematic burning of villages now occurring, then I believe it is fair to ask, what purpose is the United Nations serving in the 21st century?

Mr. Speaker, I close by adding that just yesterday the New York Times reported that villages continue to burn and that civilians are bearing the brunt of the violence in Darfur. Just last week fresh attacks killed over 100 people and drove thousands more from their homes.

Where is the international community? Something needs to be done now.

This past weekend I watched the movie "Hotel Rwanda." I urge you all to go see it. It is a movie about how the world stood by as almost a million people were slaughtered in Rwanda. The lead actor, Don Cheadle is nominated for an Oscar and the movie is nominated as best original screen play.

No one who sees that movie can leave not thinking about what is happening in Darfur. I end by asking the question . . . Who will play the leading role in Hotel Sudan?

NEEDED: CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I want to recognize the terrible tragedy that took place in my district this morning in the city of Glendale where a terrible train accident occurred.

I recently spoke with the Glendale fire chief, who informed me that the death toll has now risen to 10 from that accident. The investigation and the search effort continues. He did report to me that he was very impressed with the level of coordination of the relief agencies on the ground, the rescue agencies on the ground. I know they are doing everything humanly possible to help the victims of that terrible crash.

I also spoke with the mayor of Glendale this morning, very shaken from what he saw at the scene; and I asked him what we could do, what I could do, what our colleagues could do to help. He said just pray. Just pray.

□ 1345

I want to send my thoughts and prayers out to my Glendale and Los Angeles constituents and let them know that we will certainly do everything possible in any way, and I know my colleagues will join me in that.

I would also like to express my condolences as we mourn the loss of the 35 marines in Iraq today. To those whose loved ones were lost in the helicopter crash or in action today, our hearts, our thoughts, and our prayers are with you.

Over the past 2 days, we have learned that the President will be asking Congress for an additional \$80 billion supplemental appropriations to finance the war in Iraq and ongoing operations in Afghanistan. I support giving our troops all that they need to ensure their safety and to enable them to perform their missions, but for the past few months, I have been disturbed by continued reports that have detailed persistent shortages of up-armored Humvees in Iraq, especially given the repeated assurances by administration officials that everything that could be done about these shortages was being done. In fact, it appears this was not so.

It should not take a question from a GI in the field to spur the Secretary of